

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 002341

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/16/2013

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [YM](#) [COUNTER](#) [TERRORISM](#)

SUBJECT: YEMEN NATIONAL COURT GIVES DEATH SENTENCE TO
OPPOSITION LEADER FOR ASSASSINATIONS

REF: A. 02 SANAA 4043

[1](#)B. SANAA 976

[1](#)C. SANAA 1079

Classified By: DCM Alan G. Misenheimer for reasons 1.5 (b and d)

[1](#)1. (c) On September 15, the Northern Primary Court in Sanaa sentenced Ali al-Jarallah to death for the December 28, 2002 assassination of Jarallah Omar, deputy secretary-general of the Yemeni Socialist Party (YSP) (ref a), and plotting the December 30 murders of three American medical personnel at a hospital in Jibla. Al-Jarallah was convicted of Omar's murder and of creating a terror cell to purchase weapons and assassinate local officials and foreigners in early 2003. While the hearing on his sentence was pending, the YSP and other political organizations requested a more in-depth investigation into the financing of al-Jarallah's activities.

[1](#)2. (c) Al-Jarallah's family has complained publicly that the investigation was sub-par and that it has not been permitted to review the case file. These concerns were echoed by Human Rights Watch (HRW) in a letter sent to President Saleh in mid-August 2003. The letter requested a "special investigation. . .to be conducted in a thorough and impartial manner, into all aspects of this crime, and to make the results public." The letter noted "serious and widespread allegations about possible involvement. . .by government security officials and prominent Salifi political figures" in addition to its concerns about victim family access to the results of the state investigation. Post is unaware of an official ROYG response to this letter to date.

[1](#)3. (c) Post has not been able to determine whether a comprehensive investigation was conducted, but news reports indicate that 5-7 accomplices were also convicted and sentenced to jail time, while other suspects were acquitted. Post anticipates that al-Jarallah will appeal his sentence. The YSP has formed a coalition of opposition groups, journalists and sympathizers to continue to protest the handling of the matter and demand a more public airing of al-Jarallah's background and connections.

[1](#)4. (c) Abed Abdul Razak Kamal was sentenced to death in May 2003 for the actual murder of the three Americans in Jibla, which al-Jarallah is believed to have helped plan (refs b and c). Kamal's trial was held in the governorate of Jibla, at a state court level. In contrast to the Sana'a court, the Jibla court proceedings have been open to the public and post officials have attended a number of sessions. Kamal's appeal is still pending and is expected to take up to a year.

[1](#)5. (c) Comment: The motivations for keeping the investigation of al-Jarallah's activities and the court proceedings in his case under wraps are not obvious. The prevailing public opinion is that the government wanted the matter resolved relatively quickly and preferred to treat it as a criminal matter rather than investigating it as a political assassination or delving too deeply (and publicly) into al-Jarallah's potential links to terrorist groups. The ROYG may also be trying to garner favor with the U.S. by quickly convicting and sentencing the alleged mastermind of the Jibla murders. End comment.

HULL